

American Battle Monuments Commission

Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial

LOCATION

The Normandy American Cemetery is situated on a cliff overlooking Omaha Beach and the English Channel just east of St-Laurent-sur-Mer and northwest of Bayeux in Colleville-sur-Mer. Travel time by train from the Gare St.-Lazare (St. Lazare railway station) in Paris to Bayeux is approximately 2 ½ hours. The rail service between Paris and Bayeux is frequent, with at least four daily express trains each way. Taxi service is available from Bayeux Station to the cemetery. To travel to the cemetery from Paris by automobile, it is suggested that one take the Autoroute de l'Quest (A-13, toll highway) from Paris to Caen, then highway N-13 to Bayeux and Formigny. At Formigny turn right onto D-517 towards St. Laurent-sur-Mer; then right onto D-514 to Colleville-sur-Mer, where directional signs mark the access to the American Cemetery.

The road distances to the cemetery from some of the other cities in France are: Le Havre, 94 miles (152 kilometers); Caen, 29 miles (46 kilometers); Rouen, 110 miles (177 kilometers); and Cherbourg, 50 miles (81 kilometers). Adequate hotel accommodations are available in Caen and Bayeux as well as in surrounding villages.

HOURS

The cemetery is open daily to the public during the following hours:

SUMMER: 16 April - 30 September 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. - daily

WINTER: 1 October - 15 April 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - daily

When the cemetery is open to the public, a staff member is on duty in the Visitors' Building to answer questions and escort relatives to grave and memorialization sites.

HISTORY

Many months of planning and preparation preceded the 6 June 1944 D-Day landings in Normandy. Beginning in March 1944, Allied air forces disrupted transportation between the Seine and Loire Rivers and conducted strategic air bombardment deep into enemy

territory in an attempt to keep the German air force occupied and on the defensive and to isolate the landing areas.

On 6 June 1944, during the early morning hours of darkness, three airborne divisions (the British 6th and the U.S. 82nd and 101st) were dropped to the rear of the beach areas to cover deployment of the seaborne assault forces. Simultaneously, Allied naval forces, including the U.S. Coast Guard, swept the English Channel of mines and preceded the assault vessels to the landing areas. At 0630 hours, under cover of intense naval and air bombardment, six U.S., British and Canadian divisions began landing on Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword beaches in what was to be the greatest amphibious assault of recorded history.

The U.S. 4th Division landed at Utah Beach and pushed rapidly inland to join the airborne division. The early success and extraordinarily light casualties on Utah Beach contrasted sharply with the difficulties of the U.S. 1st and 29th divisions on Omaha Beach to the east, where the enemy was resisting with every device and weapon at its disposal. Its terrain alone was a major obstacle. Instead of sloping gently from the high ground to the rear, the beach area terminated in steep sandy bluffs. Troops had to cross an open area varying in width from a few yards at each end to about 200 yards in the center, and then attack up the steep bluffs to the plateau where the Normandy American Cemetery now stands. Patches of tall marsh grass were the only concealment available. Fighting was bitter and casualties heavy. Nevertheless, before D-Day was over, the U.S. 1st Division took the high ground on which the cemetery stands.

Further to the east on Gold, Juno and Sword landing beaches, the British and Canadian divisions forged steadily ahead. Within a week, under the cover of continuous naval gunfire and air support, the individual beachheads were linked together. Temporary anchorages and artificial harbors were constructed off the beachhead area during this period by sinking ships and anchoring prefabricated concrete caissons to the channel floor, facilitating the unloading of troops and supplies.

Rapidly, the Allied armies increased in size and strength. On 26 June, Americans freed Cherbourg; on 9 July, British and Canadians fought their way into Caen; and on 18 July Americans took St. Lo. Preceded by a paralyzing air bombardment on 25 July, the U.S. First Army stormed out of the beachhead area. Coutances was liberated three days later and, within a week, the recently activated U.S. Third Army cleared Avranches and was advancing toward Paris on a broad front.

THE SITE

The Normandy American Cemetery, 172.5 acres in extent, is one of fourteen permanent American World War II military cemeteries constructed on foreign soil by the American Battle Monuments Commission. Nearby, on D + 1 (7 June 1944), the first temporary American World War II cemetery in France was established by the American Graves Registration Service. After the war, when the temporary cemeteries were disestablished

by the Army, the remains of the American military Dead whose next-of-kin requested permanent interment overseas were moved to one of the fourteen permanent cemetery sites on foreign soil. Usually, it was the one which was closest to the temporary cemetery. There the American Graves Registration Service interred them in the distinctive grave patterns proposed by the cemetery's architect and approved by the Commission. The design and construction of all facilities at the permanent sites were the responsibility of the Commission; i.e., the memorial, chapel, visitors building, superintendent's quarters, service facilities, paths and roads. The Commission was also responsible for sculpture, landscaping and other improvements.

ARCHITECTS

Architects for the cemetery's memorial features were Harbeson, Hough, Livingston and Larson of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The landscape architect was Markley Stevenson, also of Philadelphia.

GENERAL LAYOUT

The Normandy American Cemetery is generally rectangular in shape. Its main paths are laid out in the form of a Latin cross.

An avenue bordered by hedgerows, about one-half mile in length, leads from highway D-514 to the main entrance at the southeast corner of the cemetery. Inside the main gate are the parking areas, the Visitors' Building, and the Superintendents' quarters. Beyond them, filling most of the eastern end of the cemetery is a beautiful, semi-circular memorial with a memorial garden and Tablets of the Missing to its rear. Facing west, the memorial overlooks a large reflecting pool, two flagpoles, from which American flags fly daily, the graves area and the chapel.

A wide, grassy mall extends westward from the reflecting pool bisecting the grave area. The memorial chapel is located on the mall about one-third of the way from its western end. A narrower north-south mall intersects the central mall at the chapel. Two Italian granite (Baveno) figures representing the United States and France rise above the graves area at the western end of the central mall. The Encircling the cemetery proper is a service road.

An overlook, on a small jut of land just north of the memorial affords an excellent view of Omaha Beach directly below and the English Channel. Located at the overlook is an orientation table showing the various beaches and forces involved in the Normandy landings. A low railing forms a parapet to the front at the edge of the cliff. From here, the whole action of the landings and the scaling of the escarpment may be visualized. From the overlook, steps and a path descend to the beach. Along the path is a second orientation table showing the artificial harbor or "Mulberry" in some detail. Prior to the 1944 landings, the enemy had installed artillery and machine-guns along the cliffs so that

it could fire lengthwise along the beaches. The cemetery is surrounded on the east, south and west by heavy masses of plantings.

THE MEMORIAL

The memorial structure consists of a semicircular colonnade with a loggia housing battle maps at each end and a large bronze sculpture in the open area formed by its arc. The loggias and colonnade are of Vaurion, a French limestone from the Cote d'Or region; the plinths and steps are of Ploumanach granite from Brittany. The ceilings of the loggias are of blue ceramic tile by Gentil et Bourdet of Paris. The floor of the open area within the arc is surfaced with pebbles taken from the invasion beach below the cliff and imbedded in mortar.

Centered in the open arc of the memorial facing toward the graves area is a 22-foot bronze statue, "The Spirit of American Youth Rising from the Waves," on a rectangular pedestal of Ploumanach granite. The sculptor of this was Donald De Lue of Leonardo, New Jersey. It was cast in Milan, Italy by the Battaglia Foundry. Encircling the pedestal of the statue on the floor in bronze letters is the inscription:

MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY OF THE COMING OF THE LORD.

Inserted in the floor directly, behind the statue are two small curved garden plots. Additionally, for small rectangular plots edged with boxwood are inset in the floor, two on each side of the statue. Adjacent to each rectangular plot on the side closest to the statue is a stone bench.

Carved on the inner face of the colonnade's lintel is the inscription:

THIS EMBATTLED SHORE, PORTAL OF FREEDOM,
IS FOREVER HALLOWED BY THE IDEALS,
THE VALOR AND THE SACRIFICES
OF OUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN

On the interior walls of the south loggia are three maps engraved in the stone and embellished with colored enamels. The largest map is on the south wall and is oriented with south at the top. It is entitled "THE LANDINGS ON THE NORMANDY BEACHES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BEACHHEAD" and portrays the landings of 6 June 1944, the establishment of the firm beachhead, the liberation of Cherbourg and St. Lo, and the subsequent attack by which the allied forces broke out of the beachhead.

The map on the west wall of the south loggia is entitled "AIR OPERATIONS OVER NORMANDY MARCH-AUGUST 1944" and depicts air operations prior to the landings to include isolation of the beachhead area from the interior of France.

The following text is inscribed in English on the west wall above the map (a French version is inscribed on the east wall above the map):

THE ASSAULT AND THE BEACHHEAD

MANY MONTHS OF PLANNING AND DETAILED PREPARATION PRECEDED THE ALLIED LANDINGS IN NORMANDY. THE AIR BOMBARDMENT TO ISOLATE THE BATTLEFIELD BEGAN IN MARCH 1944. DURING THE NEXT THREE MONTHS THE ALLIED AIR FORCES, BY SYSTEMATICALLY BOMBING BRIDGES AND RAIL CENTERS, DISRUPTED ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN THE SEINE AND THE LOIRE; MEANWHILE STRATEGIC AIR OPERATIONS WERE CONTINUED DEEP INTO ENEMY TERRITORY TO COMPEL THE GERMAN AIR FORCE TO REMAIN ON THE DEFENSIVE.

IN THE DARKNESS OF THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF 6 JUNE THREE AIRBORNE DIVISIONS (THE BRITISH 6TH, THE U.S. 82ND AND 101ST) DROPPED BEYOND THE BEACHES TO DESTROY ENEMY FORCES AND TO COVER THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE SEABORNE ASSAULT TROOPS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE ALLIED NAVAL FORCES SWEEPED THE ENGLISH CHANNEL OF MINES AND PRECEDED THE ASSAULT VESSELS TO THE LANDING AREAS. AT 0630 HOURS, UNDER COVER OF NAVAL GUNFIRE AND AIR BOMBARDMENT, SIX U.S. BRITISH AND CANADIAN DIVISIONS LANDED IN THE GREATEST AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT RECORDED IN HISTORY.

AT UTAH BEACH, THE U.S. 4TH DIVISION PUSHED RAPIDLY INLAND TO JOIN THE U.S. AIRBORNE DIVISIONS. AT OMAHA BEACH, PROGRESS OF THE U.S. 1ST AND 29TH DIVISION WAS SLOWER. CASUALTIES WERE HEAVIER, THE FIGHTING BITTER. ON GOLD, JUNO AND SWORD BEACHES, THE BRITISH AND CANADIANS FORGED STEADILY AHEAD. WITHIN A WEEK, UNDER COVER OF CONTINUOUS NAVAL GUNFIRE AND AIR SUPPORT, THE INDIVIDUAL BEACHHEADS HAD BEEN LINKED TOGETHER.

MEANWHILE, NAVAL PERSONNEL WERE ESTABLISHING TEMPORARY ANCHORAGES AND ARTIFICIAL HARBORS BY SINKING SHIPS AND PREFABRICATED CONCRETE CAISSONS. THESE EXPEDIENTS WERE OF PRICELESS AND IN THE UNLOADING OF TROOPS AND CARGO OVER THE UNSHELTERED BEACHES.

THE ALLIED ARMIES GREW RAPIDLY IN STRENGTH. DRIVING NORTHWARD, AMERICAN FORCES, AIDED BY STRONG NAVAL AND AIR BOMBARDMENT, FREED CHERBOURG ON 26 JUNE. ON 9 JULY, THE BRITISH AND CANADIANS FOUGHT THEIR WAY INTO CAEN. NINE DAYS LATER U.S. UNITS TOOK ST. LO. THE ALLIES COULD NOW UNLEASH THEIR PLANNED ATTACK TO BREAK OUT OF THE BEACHHEAD. WHILE BRITISH FORCES HEAVILY ENGAGED THE ENEMY ON THE ALLIES LEFT FLANK, AMERICAN TROOPS WEST OF ST. LO. UNDERTOOK THE MAJOR EFFORT TO DRIVE THROUGH THE ENEMY DEFENSES. ON 25 JULY, FOLLOWING A PARALYZING BOMBARDMENT BY THE U.S. EIGHTH AND NINTH AIR FORCES

AND THE ROYAL AIR FORCE, THE U.S. 4TH, 9TH AND 30TH DIVISIONS OPENED A GAP IN THE ENEMY LINE. THIS WAS PROMPTLY EXPLOTTED BY THE 1ST INFANTRY AND 2ND AND 3RD ARMORED DIVISIONS, OTHER AMERICAN FORCES PROGRESSIVELY ADDED THEIR EFFORTS, LIBERATING COUTANCES ON 28 JULY. IN A WEEK THE DRIVE HAD CLEARED AVRANCHES.

AFTER NEARLY TWO MONTHS CONFINEMENT TO THE BEACHHEAD AREA, THE ALLIED ARMIES HAD FINALLY BROKEN INTO THE OPEN AND WERE MOVING FORWARD ON A BROAD FRONT.

The map on the east wall is entitled "6 JUNE 1944 THE AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT LANDINGS" and shows the naval plan for the landing and the manner in which was executed.

Carved in the north wall of the north loggia of the memorial is a large map executed in a technique similar to that of the south loggia maps, entitled "MILITARY OPERATIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE, 6 JUNE 1944-8 MAY 1945. It records the progress of the military operations in northwest. Europe, from the landings in Normandy to the end of the war. On the east and west walls are descriptive texts in English and French and six key maps. The English text is as follows:

FROM NORMANDY TO THE ELBE

REACTING TO THE BREAK-OUT BY THE ALLIED FORCES FROM THE NORMANDY BEACHHEAD, THE ENEMY LAUNCHED A COUNTERATTACK TOWARD AVRANCHES WITH THE DESPERATE HOPE OF CUTTING OF OUR ADVANCING COLUMNS, BUT WAS REPULSED WITH HEAVY LOSSES THEREUPON. AMERICAN FORCES SWUNG NORTHWARD TOWARD ARGENTAN WHILE AT THE SAME TIME THE BRITISH AND CANADIANS ADVANCED SOUTHWARD ON FALAISE. THREATENED WITH ENCIRCLEMENT, THE ENEMY TURNED BACK. HARASSED BY AIRCRAFT, HAMMERED INCESSANTLY BY ARTILLERY, THE RETREAT BECAME A ROUT. BY 22 AUGUST, THE POCKET WAS ELIMINATED.

PRECEDED BY AIRCRAFT OF THE U.S. EIGHTH AND NINTH AIR FORCES AND THE BRITISH SECOND TACTICAL AIR FORCE, WHOSE CONSTANT ATTACKS HASTENED THE DISORGANIZATION OF THE RETREATING ENEMY, THE ALLIED ARMIES CROSSED THE SEINE, LIBERATED PARTS, AND SWEEP ONWARD. AS THE DISTANCE FROM NORMANDY INCREASED THE SUPPLY PROBLEM BECAME ACUTE. STRONG ENEMY GARRISONS STILL HELD MOST OF THE CHANNEL PORTS, THUS PLACING A TREMENDOUS BURDEN UPON OUR LIMITED HARBOR FACILITIES. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ARMY AND NAVY SUPPLY SERVICES IN SUSTAINING THE ADVANCING ARMIES CONTRIBUTED VITALLY TO THE LIBERATION OF NORTHERN FRANCE.

BY MID-SEPTEMBER, BRITISH AND CANADIAN TROOPS HAD FREED

BRUSSELS AND ANTWERP AND ENTERED THE NETHERLANDS. THE U.S. FIRST ARMY HAD SWEEPED ACROSS BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG TO THE GERMAN BORDER, WHILE THE THIRD ARMY, AIDED BY AIRBORNE SUPPLY, BEACHED THE MOSELLE IN A RAPID ADVANCE. IN BRITTANY THE GARRISON OF BREST SURRENDERED TO THE NEWLY ACTIVATED NINTH ARMY ON 15 SEPTEMBER. ON THE RIGHT FLANK THE U.S. SEVENTH AND FRENCH FIRST ARMIES, SUPPORTED BY THE U.S. FIRST TACTICAL AIR FORCE, ADVANCED FROM THE BEACHES OF SOUTHERN FRANCE TO EXTEND THE ALLIED FRONT FROM SOLIDLY TO THE SWISS FRONTIER.

PROGRESS IN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS WAS SLOW, THE FIGHTING BITTER, AS OPPOSITION STIFFENED. A MINOR ADVANCE WAS EFFECTED IN THE NETHERLANDS WHEN THE ALLIED FIRST AIRBORNE ARMY LANDED IN THE ARNHEM-EINDHOVEN AREA IN A VALIANT BUT UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO SEIZE THE CROSSINGS OF THE LOWER RHINE. THERE FOLLOWED A SERIES OF GALLANT AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS TO CLEAR THE WATER APPROACHES TO THE PORT OF ANTWERP. IN THE CENTER, AMERICAN TROOPS BROKE THROUGH THE SIEGFRIED LINE, SEIZE AACHEN, AND FOUGHT THEIR WAY TO THE ROER RIVER. FARTHER SOUTH THE FORTRESS OF METZ CAPITULATED AFTER A BETTER STRUGGLE, WHILE ON THE RIGHT FLANK THE AMERICANS AND FRENCH REACHED THE RHINE AT STRASBOURG AND MULHOUSE.

IN THE ARDENNES ON 16 DECEMBER THE ENEMY LAUNCHED ITS FINAL MAJOR COUNTER-OFFENSIVE, UNLEASHING THREE ARMIES ON A NARROW FRONT. THE STALWART DEFENSE AND SUPERB FIGHTING SKILL OF THE AMERICAN SOLDIER FINALLY HALTED THIS DRIVE. PROMPT AND CONTINUOUS COUNTERMEASURES BY GROUND AND AIR FORCES SUCCEEDED IN ELIMINATING THE GERMAN SALIENT BY MID-JANUARY. ON NEW YEAR'S EVE AN ENEMY ATTACK NEAR COLMAR WAS ALSO REPULSED AFTER A FURIOUS STRUGGLE.

ALLIED OPERATIONS TO CLEAR THE WEST BANK OF THE RHINE IN FEBRUARY AND EARLY MARCH WERE BRILLIANTLY SUCCESSFUL; THE ARMIES INTENDED FOR THE DEFENSE OF GERMANY WERE SHATTERED BEYOND REPAIR. IN RAPID SUCCESSION, OUR FORCES THEN SEIZED A BRIDGE AT REMAGEN, FORCED A CROSSING AT OPPENHEIM, AND STAGED THEIR MAJOR AMPHIBIOUS AND AIRBORNE ASSAULT NORTH OF THE RUHR VALLEY. AS OUR GROUND FORCES RUSHED EASTWARD, PRECEDED BY AIRCRAFT WHICH HARASSED AND DEMORALIZED THE RETREATING ENEMY, THE RUHR WAS ENCIRCLED IN A GIGANTIC DOUBLE ENVELOPMENT. SWEEPING THROUGH GERMANY THE ALLIED ARMIES MET THE ADVANCING TROOPS OF THE U.S.S.R. AT THE ELBE. ITS FORCES HAVING COMPLETELY DISINTEGRATED, THE ENEMY CAPITULATED ON 8

MAY 1945, THUS BRINGING TO AN END THE CAMPAIGN BEGUN ELEVEN MONTHS BEFORE ON THE BEACHES OF NORMANDY.

* * *

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL WAR 1941-1945

THESE SMALLER MAPS PORTRAY THE VAST AND DECISIVE EFFORT EXERTED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND HER ALLIES IN THE MANY INTERDEPENDENT THEATERS OF GLOBAL WAR. THEY RELATE THE MAJOR EVENTS TO EACH OTHER IN TERMS OF TIME AND SPACE.

The maps in each loggia were designed by Robert Foster of New York City, New York from data furnished by the American Battle Monuments Commission and were executed by Maurice Schmit of Paris, France.

The following dedicatory inscription appears in French on the west face of the south loggia and in English on the west face of the north loggia:

1941-1945

IN PROUD REMEMBRANCE OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF HER SONS AND
IN HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO THEIR SACRIFICES
THIS MEMORIAL HAS BEEN ERECTED BY
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Inset in a tall rectangular aperture in the east and west walls of each loggia is a large bronze urn on which are sculptured two different scenes in high relief. The urns were designed by Donald De Lue and cast by the Marinelli Foundry of Florence, Italy. The scene on one urn in each loggia is that of a dying warrior astride a charging horse, symbolic of war, as an Angel of God supports him and receives his spirit. On the opposite side of urn, a woman kneels holding her child beside the wreath decorated grave of a soldier as the Star of Eternal Life shines above, symbolic of the immense sacrifice by women and children bereaved in war. The laurel leaf design around the top of the urn signifies victory and honor.

On the other urn in each loggia is a figure representative of God in Genesis, Chapter 1: "The spirit of the Lord moved on the face of the waters." On the water below the figure is a spray of laurel recalling to memory those who lost their lives at sea; a rainbow emanates from each hand of the figure symbolizing hope and peace. The opposite side of the urn shows an angel pushing away a stone, symbolic of the Resurrection and Eternal Life.

The four scenes on the urns in the north loggia are the same as the four scenes on the urns in the south loggia. The urns, however, have been placed on their pedestals so that the scenes facing into the loggias are different.

The Great Seal of the United States is inscribed on the south face of the south loggia. Beneath the seal is engraved:

A.D. 1945,

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION
HARBESON HOUGH LIVINGSTON AND LARSON ARCHITECTS

PAUL BRANCHE ARCHITECTE REPRESENTANT LOCAL

The reverse of the Great Seal is inscribed on the north face of the north loggia.

The carillon, located at the Memorial, was presented on May 24, 1987 to the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial by the American Veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam (AMVETS). It is dedicated as a living memorial to those U. S. War Dead who made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of freedom.

THE CHAPEL

The circular chapel in the graves area is constructed of Vaurion limestone except for its steps which are of granite. surmounting the chapel is a bronze finial with armillary sphere that serves as a lightning arrester.

On the outside wall of the chapel to the north of its entrance are the inscriptions:
THIS CHAPEL HAS BEEN ERECTED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF HER SONS
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE LANDINGS ON THE NORMANDY BEACHES
AND IN THE LIBERATION OF NORTHERN FRANCE.

THEIR GRAVES ARE THE PERMANENT AND VISIBLE SYMBOL OF
THEIR HEROIC DEVOTION AND THEIR SACRIFICE IN THE
COMMON CAUSE OF HUMANITY

An engraved star separates the two inscriptions. A French translation of the texts is inscribed on the outside wall of the chapel to the south. On the exterior of the lintel of the chapel is inscribed:

THESE ENDURED ALL AND GAVE ALL
THAT JUSTICE AMONG NATIONS MIGHT PREVAIL AND
THAT MANKIND MIGHT ENJOY FREEDOM AND INHERIT PEACE.

Directly above the chapel's door is engraved a replica of the Congressional Medal of Honor, our country's highest award for valor.

CHAPEL INTERIOR

On entering the chapel, one's attention is drawn immediately to the altar of black and gold Pyrenees Grand Antique marble with the inscription engraved across its front:

I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE AND
THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH

Directly behind the altar, a tall window with a translucent amber coating illuminates it with a soft yellow light. On the glass around the edges of the window are 48 stars representing the then 48 States. Immediately above the altar table is a Star of David with a dove in the center of the Star. Affixed to the lower half of the window is a thin teakwood Latin cross, the sides of which are encased in gold-leafed copper. The

altar sits on a two-tiered platform of travertine limestone quarried in France and is flanked on both sides by flags of the United States, France, Great Britain and Canada.

The interior walls of the chapel also are of travertine limestone quarried in France. Inscribed on the south interior wall is the inscription:

THROUGH THE GATE OF DEATH MAY THEY PASS
TO THEIR JOYFUL RESURRECTION

Above the inscription is a Latin cross in relief carved on a circle. Separating the inscription and the cross are three small, engraved stars. directly opposite on the north interior wall of the chapel is the inscription:

THINK NOT ONLY UPON THEIR PASSING
REMEMBER THE GLORY OF THE SPIRIT

Over the inscription are the Tablets of Moses surmounted by a Star of David carved in relief on a circle. Separating the inscription and the tablets are three small, engraved stars. The colorful mosaic ceiling was designed and executed by Leon Kroll of the New York City. It symbolizes America blessing sons as they depart by sea and air to fight for freedom, and a grateful France bestowing a laurel wreath upon American Dead who gave their lives to liberate Europe's oppressed peoples. The return of peace is recalled by the angel, dove and the homeward bound ship.

THE GARDEN OF THE MISSING

Behind the memorial structure is the Garden of the Missing. Its semicircular wall, contains the names and particulars engraved on stone tablets of the 1,557 Missing in the region who gave their lives in the service of their country but whose remains have not been recovered or if recovered, have not been identified. Included among these are twin brothers. They came from 49 of the 50 States of the Union, the District of Columbia and Guam. The tablets are separated on the wall by large sculptured laurel leaves.

Without confirmed information to the contrary, a War Department Administrative Review Board established the official date of death of those commemorated on the Tablets of the Missing as one year and a day from the date on which the individual was placed in Missing in Action status.

The following inscription in English and French appear on the wall above the names of the Missing:

HERE ARE RECORDED THE NAMES OF AMERICANS
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY AND
WHO SLEEP IN UNKNOWN GRAVES.

THIS IS THEIR MEMORIAL
THE WHOLE EARTH THEIR SEPULCHER.
COMRADES IN ARMS WHOSE RESTING PLACE IS KNOWN ONLY TO GOD.

At the rear of the memorial colonnade on the western side of the garden is inscribed this extract from the dedication by General Dwight D. Eisenhower of the

”Golden Book” now enshrined in St. Paul’s Cathedral in London:

TO THESE WE OWE THE HIGH RESOLVE THAT
THE CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY DIED SHALL LIVE.

Radiating from the memorial to the curved wall of the Missing are five paths dividing the garden into four truncated fan-shaped lawn areas. Two paths paralleling the arc of the memorial and the garden wall connect the radiating paths.

GRAVES AREA

The graves area contains ten grave plots, five on each side of the main (east-west) mall. Facing the graves area from the memorial, plot A, C, E, G and I line the left (south) side of the main mall and plots B, D, F, H and J the right. Interred within them are the remains of 9,386 servicemen and women. Three hundred and seven of which are Unknowns (those which could not be identified), three Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, and four women. Also buried here, side by side, are father and son, and 33 pairs of brothers. Each grave is marked with a white marble headstone, a Star of David for those of the Jewish faith, a Latin cross for all others. The aligned headstones against the immaculately maintained emerald green lawn convey an unforgettable feeling of peace and serenity.

The servicemen and women interred in the cemetery came from all fifty States and the District of Columbia. A small number also came from England, Scotland and Canada.

VISITORS’ BUILDING

The Visitors’ Building is located to the left of the parking area at the head of the path leading to the memorial. It contains the Superintendent’s office, toilet facilities, and a comfortably furnished room where visitors may obtain information, sign the register and pause to refresh themselves. During visiting hours, a member of the cemetery staff is available in the building to answer questions and provide information on burials and memorializations in the Commission’s cemeteries, accommodations in the vicinity, travel, local history and other items of interest.

TIME CAPSULE

Imbedded in the lawn directly opposite the entrance to the Visitors’ Building is a time capsule in which have been sealed news reports of the 6 June 1944 Normandy landings. The capsule is covered by a Ploumanach rose granite slab upon which is engraved:

TO BE OPENED JUNE 6, 2044

Affixed in the center of the slab is a bronze plaque adorned with the five stars of a General of the Army and engraved with the following inscription:

IN MEMORY OF GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
AND THE FORCES UNDER HIS COMMAND
THIS SEALED CAPSULE CONTAINING NEWS REPORTS
OF THE JUNE 6, 1944 NORMANDY LANDINGS IS PLACED
HERE BY THE NEWSMEN WHO WERE HERE.

JUNE 6, 1969

PLANTINGS

The cemetery is surrounded on the east, south and west by heavy masses of Austrian pine (*pinus nigra*) interplanted with Whitebeam (*sorbus aria*), Russian olive (*eleagnus augustifolia*), sea buckthorn (*hippophae rhamniodes*) Japanese rose (*rosa rugosa*), and French tamarisk (*tamarix galliea*). Interspersed among the plots in the graves area are informal massifs of deciduous and conifer trees, shrubs and Japanese roses.

The lawn areas of the Garden of the Missing are bordered with beds of polyantha roses, elm trees (*ulmus sapporo*) and golden cypress (*cupressocy-paris leylandii*).

POINTE DU HOC MONUMENT

Located on a cliff eight miles west of the Normandy American Cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach, the Pointe du Hoc Monument was erected by the French to honor elements of the 2d Ranger Battalion. Under the command of LTC James E. Rudder, it scaled the 100-foot cliff, seized the objective, and, at high cost, defended it successfully against determined German counterattacks. The monument consists of a simple granite pylon atop a concrete bunker with inscriptions in French and English on tablets at its base. It was officially turned over to the American government on 11 January 1979 for care and maintenance in perpetuity. This 30-acre battle-scarred area on the right flank of Omaha Beach remains much as the Rangers left it on 8 June 1944.

UTAH BEACH MONUMENT

The Utah Beach Monument is located at the termination of Highway N-13D, approximately 3 kilometers northeast of Ste-Marie-du-Mont (Manche), France. This monument commemorates the achievements of the American Forces of the VII Corps who fought in the liberation of the Cotentin Peninsula from 6 June to 1 July 1944. It consists of a red granite obelisk surrounded by a small, developed park overlooking the historic sand dunes of Utah Beach, one of the two American landing beaches during the Normandy Invasion of June 1944.